

**CITY OF SNOHOMISH
REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
March 3, 2021**

NOTE: Due to the COVID-19 declared federal, state and local emergency, and pursuant to Governor Inslee's Proclamations 20-05 and 20-28, the Snohomish Planning Commission held its meeting via remote participation.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission was opened by Chair Hank Eskridge at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 3, 2021.

2. FLAG SALUTE

3. ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Hank Eskridge, Chair
Gordon Cole
Mitch Cornelison
Terry Lippincott
Nick Gottuso
Christine Wakefield Nichols
Van Tormohlen

STAFF:

Glen Pickus, Planning Director
Brooke Eidem, Planner

OTHERS PRESENT:

Ann Lewis, public

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA ORDER

Commissioner Lippincott moved to approve the agenda order as presented. Commissioner Cornelison seconded the motion, which passed 7-0.

5. APPROVAL of the minutes of the January 13, 2021, regular meeting.

Commissioner Cole moved to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2021 meeting as written. Commissioner Lippincott seconded the motion, which passed 7-0.

6. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments on items not on the agenda

7. PUBLIC HEARING: BANNER SIGNS CODE AMENDMENT

Chair Eskridge opened the public hearing. Mr. Pickus presented draft code amendments that would regulate non-commercial banner signs differently than commercial banner signs. The proposal is in response to docket application DK2021-3, submitted by the First Presbyterian Church of Snohomish. The draft amendments include new definitions in SMC 14.25.030, and a new subsection E to SMC 14.245.075 for non-commercial banner regulations. Some non-substantive amendments are also proposed elsewhere in the sign temporary sign section, in order to improve clarity.

As drafted, existing banner regulations would apply to commercial banners. Only non-profit entities may display non-commercial banners, and they cannot advertise a commercial

activity. The draft code regulates duration of display and setbacks for placement. The number of banners allowed is also regulated, based on the size of the lot.

The Planning Commission discussed what could be advertised on a non-commercial banner sign. Events, including fundraising events, are allowed, but no products for sale or other commercial enterprises. Message signs were discussed. Mr. Pickus stated the draft regulations do not consider those, but the Planning Commission could recommend a duration limit for those, since they are not based on an event. A 60-day limit was proposed for message banners.

Ms. Lewis was present on behalf of the First Presbyterian Church. She stated the church wants to comply with sign regulations, and explained three banner signs are currently displayed on the property. She requested clarity about exemptions and other code provisions. She asked whether banners can be displayed perpendicular to the street, and if two identical banners in a V-shape or back-to-back would be allowed to count as a single banner. The church is currently considering a wooden frame to hold two banners clustered together.

Mr. Pickus explained the “religious symbols” exemption to the code refers to universal symbols like a cross or Star of David but not text or scripture. He also noted that back-to-back banners could count as one, but not the angled banners if they can both be seen at the same time. As drafted, there is nothing requiring banners to be oriented parallel to the street.

Mr. Cole moved to close the public hearing and Ms. Lippincott seconded. The Commission voted 7-0 to close the public hearing and begin deliberations.

Banner structures were discussed. Mr. Pickus noted, as drafted banners would have to be attached to a fence or mounted to a structure with all four sides secured. Mr. Tormohlen was concerned that the signs would no longer be temporary if the structure is permanent. It could easily become a freestanding sign. Mr. Cole emphasized the need to ensure signs are maintained in good condition, and some kind of rigid structure helps the general appearance of the signs.

Several Commissioners were concerned that the draft regulations would result in a proliferation of banner signs in residential neighborhoods. Mr. Cornelison noted the public demand for the code amendment is limited. He moved to limit the code amendment to duration only for non-commercial banners, but also include the non-substantive language changes for clarity purposes. There was no second, but the Planning Commission agreed that although commercial and non-commercial banners should be differentiated, the draft amendments need to be revisited and discussed further.

Mr. Pickus asked the Planning Commission for direction on the following:

- Should the sign code be amended to allow more than one non-commercial banner per site? If so, how many?
- Should the sign code be amended to increase the display duration for non-commercial banners? If so, for how long?

The Planning Commission generally agreed that two banners should be the maximum number allowed per site for large properties (greater than 10,000 square feet), and smaller properties should be limited to one banner.

Duration was discussed. The Planning Commission generally agreed that 30 days is not long enough, but 60 days is too long. A rest period between displays, or regulating the number of consecutive days of display should be considered.

Mr. Gottuso noted there is a statutory definition for commercial and non-commercial that should be integrated into the draft definitions.

Mr. Cornelison noted a 45-square-foot banner on 100 feet of property frontage is a lot of signage. He suggested regulating the frontage so that one banner is allowed per 150 feet of frontage, up to a maximum of two banners per site for larger properties. He suggested a 45-day maximum display for any one sign, with three display periods allowed per calendar year. Two banners can be displayed at the same time but each would have its own 45-day limit.

Mr. Pickus stated staff would return to the Planning Commission with some drafts to discuss at a future workshop, with various options on numbers. One option will include cumulative display limits.

8. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Pickus said the City Clerk is working on cleaning up Title 2 of the SMC, which creates the boards and commissions. She is trying to improve the reappointment process and make it easier to schedule. Her proposal is to have each board and commission on a set schedule so that each members' term ends on the same month of the year. If adopted, the reappointment month for the Planning Commission terms will be September. This seems to work with the upcoming terms, however some members will end up with a term that exceeds six years by a few months.

Mr. Pickus noted the last meeting of the Midtown Task Force is Tuesday, March 9th. After that, the Planning Commission will have their recommendations to consider.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Approved this 7th day of April, 2021.

By: /s/Hank Eskridge

Commissioner Hank Eskridge, Chair